Scheme. These are abolition of pre-export DEPB scheme, rationalisation of DEPB rates to account for the changes in customs duties, fixation of Caps on certain items but without verification of Present Market Value (PMV) on such items and removal of threshold limit of 20 crore for fixation new DEPB rates.

(b) The above steps have been taken as part of export promotion measures and also as part of simplification of procedures. It is, however, not possible to quantify at this stage the savings, if any, likely to accrue at a consequence of these changes.

Agenda for next World Trade Body Meeting

4456. DR. ALLADI P. RAJKUMAR : Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state :

(a) Whether India proposed to raise the issue of E-commerce, Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) and domain names in internet at the next World Trade Body meetings; and

(b) if so, the measures taken to persuade other developing countries to raise issue along with India ?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN) : (a) and (b) World Trade Organisation has established a work programme to examine all issues related to trade in global electronic commerce in Council for Trade in Goods, Council for Trade in Intellectual Property Rights, Council for Trade in Services and Committee for Trade and Development. India has actively participated in the discussions. India's concerns are with respect to issues relating to the developmental dimension of electronic commerce, applicability of existing WTO rules to electronic transmissions, domain names, jurisdiction and enforcement of intellectual Property Rights (IPR), etc. India would like the work programme to address these concerns. However, the discussions are still in initial stages and India will continue to seek support from other countries with a view to project and protect our interests.

Protection to Agriculture Sector

4457. SHRI P. PRABHAKAR REDDY : Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state :

(a) Whether it is a fact that free imports of some items allowed in the new Exim Policy are likely to adversely affect the agriculturists and farmers in the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) what steps are proposed to be taken in order to protect the interests of the country's agricultural sector ?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN) : (a) to (c) Import restrictions on various items including agricultural products are being removed as part of the economic liberalisation programme of the government and also in terms of our international obligations.

However, all imports in the country are subject to applicable rates of customs duties and also subject to domestic laws, rules, orders, regulations, technical specifications, environmental and safety norms as applicable to domestically produced goods. This should provide adequate protection to domestic farmers.

India's tariff bindings at W.T.O. for most of the agricultural items are fairly high and effective rates of customs duties can be raised to those levels, in case there is any evidence of substantial increase in imports.

In the recent past, import duties on many of the agricultural items, (Chapter 1 to 24 of ITC (HS) Classification of Export and Import Items), have been increased to provide further protection to domestic farmers, e.g. duty on rice has been increased upto 80%, on maize upto 50%, on apples upto 50%, on wheat upto 50%, on sugar upto 60% and on poultry products upto 100%.

The imports are being closely monitored and Government is determined to ensure through appropriate use of the tariff mechanism that imports do not cause any serious detriment or injury to the domestic farmers.

Adverse impact on small scale sector

4458. SHRI P. PRABHAKAR REDDY : Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state :

(a) Whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news-item appearing in the Economic Times dated 1st April, 2000 under the caption ''small scale sector feeling the heat''

(b) whether any study has been made of the possible adverse impact of the Exim Policy announced for 2000-2001 on the small scale sector;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and